POEMS:

EDWARD AND ISABELLA;

ELEGY ON THE DEATH OF A CHILD.

LONDON:
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M.DCC.LXXVI.

EDWARD AND ISABELLA,

A POEM.

——————————— Edward fam'd for woes
Of ill-requited love. The faithless pride
Of Isabella sank him to the grave
In manhood's prime. But soon did righteous heaven
With tears, with sharp remorse, & pining care
Avenge her falsehood: nor could all the gold
And nuptial pomp, which bar'd her plighted faith
From Edward to a loftier husband's home
Relieve her breaking heart.

See Akenside's works P 395.

~~Advertisement~~

The following letter was written from the Retirement, to which Edward resorted in the country after his disappointment. The effects of that letter, & of the dismal event which immediately succeeded, are represented in the subsequent part of the poem.

TO A FRIEND.

BEFORE you read the inclofed Poem, I wifh to make you acquainted with the perfons, who are the fubject of it. Edward was a youth of fmall fortune, but of fair morals, and improved underftanding. He was ftruck with the beauty and accomplifhments of Ifabella; who, having given a favourable reception to his addreffes, confented to marry him. The completion of their wifhes was protracted, a confiderable time, on occafion of fome affairs refpecting the ftate into which they were to enter, and by the delays of law. In this interval, Frederick, with whom fhe had been long acquainted, became her fuitor. He was in the prime of youth; had the vivacity common to his age, with a good figure, and winning manners: He was alfo of an ancient family, and had great poffeffions. Ifabella had a heart too fenfible of thefe attractions; and, after a fevere ftruggle with thofe feelings, which pleaded in Edward's favour, gave her hand to Frederick.

When the firft tranfports of paffion, arifing from the difappointment, were paffed, Edward determined to quit

quit the world, and to betake himſelf to retirement and ſtudy; hoping that, in the quiet of ſuch a life, he might gradually forget his ſorrow. But he judged amiſs: Solitude ſerved only to increaſe his melancholy; which, after three long years of mourning, urged him to a dreadful reſolution. Before the executing of it, he took leave of her, who had forſaken him, in the letter, which begins the Poem.

Frederick and Iſabella paſſed a few months, after marriage, in that ſort of joy and giddineſs, which youth feels from the uncontrolled diſſipation of riches in a life of pleaſure. But this ſtate of ſatisfaction laſted not long. Frederick, among other extravagances, gave into that of gaming, which reduced him to great diſtreſs, and at laſt to extreme want; when, being ſunk into a ſtate of inſupportable miſery, he abandoned wife, family, and friends, and was afterwards never heard of.

Iſabella, who ſhared his vanities, partook largely of his afflictions; falling from the pride and gaiety of ſplendid profuſion to the horrors of unpitied and friendleſs poverty. In that ſituation, ſhe received Edward's letter; the effects of which are ſeen in the ſubſequent part of the poem.

EDWARD

EDWARD AND ISABELLA.

"WILL Isabella, when she hears the cries
Of Edward's sorrows yet again arise,
Will she let fall a drop of tender wo,
And sanctify the tears, she taught to flow?
'Tis all, he asks: Nor comes he to upbraid
Thy virgin faith, that swerv'd, or cast the shade
Of dark remorse, o'er thy unclouded brow—
No: May the God, who heard thy Frederick's vow,
Shut ~~my departing soul from heaven, if e'er,~~ me from thee in heaven; if in despair,
~~In~~ And malice of my heart, I call on Care
To bid the reign of joy within thee cease,
Or mar the milder blessings of thy peace!

May

To blight the harvest of thy joy's increase;
Or mar

May he, who crops the roſes of thy charms,
Claſp'd in the paradiſe of Beauty's arms,
To whom thou yield'ſt each love-compelling grace,
Which decks thy form, or brightens in thy face;
Who reigns, where Edward once poſſeſs'd a part,
Supreme, alone, the idol of thy heart;
May he, a living fount of pure delight,
The richeſt bleſſings, which thou giv'ſt, requite!
Each yielded charm with anſwering charms return,
Smile on thy mirth, with all thy ardour burn;
Search the mute will, prevent the aſking eye,
Each joy divide, and melt with every ſigh:
Still love the virtues, which his youth engage,
Cheriſh thy bloom of life, protect thy age;
Till late ye give to air this vital breath,
Dropping, like Autumn's fruit, mature to death!
Peace be o'er all your days! Nor may a ſigh
E'er touch your breaſts, but thoſe of ſympathy;
Such tender wo, as kindeſt Heaven deſign'd
To ſooth, to ſoften, and adorn the mind!

Such

Such tender wo, as wept from hearts ſincere
By pity touch'd, ſhall dew thine Edward's bier;
Edward, who, ere theſe lateſt lines be read,
Shall paſs from life, and join the love-lorn dead,
Imboſom'd in the gloom of that retreat,
Where love and ſorrow a dread refuge meet.

Too long, in this ſad ſolitude, I pray'd
To abſent peace, and aſk'd of wiſdom aid:
I ſearch'd each rule, with which inſtruction taught
My tender youth, and ſtrengthen'd riſing thought:
But ſoon, too ſoon I found the moral ſtrain,
That pleas'd unwounded fancy, weak and vain
'Gainſt real grief: Then came ſeverer care:
I ſought for comfort, but I found deſpair.

Next o'er the world I caſt a ſtudious eye,
And view'd the wonders of the earth and ſky:
From matter brute to conſcious life, and thence
I roſe to man, and to Omnipotence.
But all was vain: The grief with paſſion fraught,
Which ſway'd my mind, and liv'd in every thought,

Blunted each ſenſe, each faculty oppreſs'd,
And reign'd in cloud and horrour o'er my breaſt.
If, ſo to ſpeed the flight of ling'ring hours,
To poetry I turn'd, and fiction's powers,
Love was the theme, which only knew to gain
A ſhort attention, and amuſe my pain:
O'er each diſtreſs I hung with kindly care;
Then ſmote my breaſt, and dwelt on ſorrows there:
If happier paſſions did the Muſe employ,
And long-expecting faith was crown'd with joy,
(Short pleaſure paſs'd,) in thought I oft would ſay,
"Have I borne leſs, am I leſs true, than they?"
Then fiercer ſtorms began within to roll,
And floods of deeper ſorrow whelm'd my ſoul.
I knew the time, when, oft as lighter grief
Clouded dull thought, the Muſe with ſweet relief
Came laughing o'er my heart, and ever nigh
The ſhort-liv'd trouble chas'd, or brighten'd joy:
The Muſe and fancy now to wo reſign'd,
Imbibe the ſullen colour of my mind.

Now

Now Memory paints, and bids in viſion move
The fair ideas of yet happy love;
Tells me how oft we talk'd from morn till noon,
From noon how oft we talk'd, till the low ſun
Sunk in the Weſt, and brings each dear delight
Once ſhar'd, once grac'd by thee, to Edward's ſight.
The wakeful morn, whoſe dawning rays impart
Reviving life, and comfort to the heart,
The ſoftly-falling ſhades of eve, that cloſe
The toil of day, and ſhed their ſweet repoſe,
The ſtream, that murmurs to the ſhepherd's tale,
The breezy hill, warm mead, and quiet vale,
Theſe, that once heard, and hail'd my frequent ſong,
When mirth and muſic dwelt upon my tongue,
Regretful ſorrows to the Muſe ſupply;
Wake the vain tear, and raiſe the fruitleſs ſigh.
No more to me or morn, or eve is fair,
Or ſtream, whoſe murmurs lull the ſhepherd's ear:
With me the hill, the mead, the vallies mourn,
Of her, with whom they pleas'd, of her forlorn.

Say, did I fail, ye Orbs, who roll on high,
To bend the knee, and lift th' imploring eye?
Say, did I fail my plaints, that vex'd the air,
To pour aloud, and weary Heaven with pray'r?
Ye gentle ſpirits, purg'd of mortal clay,
Who glide in regions of eternal day,
Was not my voice oft heard in your abode?
Say, was the peace, I need, unaſk'd of God?
Yet ſorrowing ſtill I wear my youth away,
Abhor the ſleepleſs night, and hate the day:
Yet ſtill unpitied melts my plaint in air,
Still holy Heaven, that hears, neglects, my pray'r.
Yet Death remains. Behold the Shadow here;
The hate of hopeful youth, the ſinner's fear!
Death yet remains; the ſleep of watchful care,
Still ſorrow's wiſh, and comfort of deſpair.
—Ah! Stay that lifted ſtroke. Shall man preſume
To ſeek the horrours of th' unhallow'd tomb?
Unſummon'd ſhall the ſickly ſoul ariſe,
Break from her earthly clod, and dare the ſkies?

—Why

— Why ſhould I fear? When free from paſſion's ſtrife,
I knew the ſweet ſocieties of life;
And walk'd, ere yet *my* ſorrows did complain,
In vallies dark and ſad of worldly pain,
Had I a hand, that ſpar'd to raiſe diſtreſs,
An eye to pity, or a heart to bleſs?
When to the ſtranger, led by friendly fate
Joy came with flowers, and ſmil'd upon his ſtate,
Did I with envy at the bliſs repine,
Which roſe upon that brother's life to ſhine?
Or rather catch a pleaſure from the ray
On me reflected from his brighter day?
When glad I amply dealt reviving aid,
And kindneſs was with mortal hate repaid;
When a fell traitor, whom no virtue binds,
Once gave my comfort to the ſtormy winds;
Did I, the ſlave of ſullen malice, hear
The voice of pity with averted ear?
Or did the dews of charity to all,
From the warm heart, in fainter bleſſings fall?

Now,

Now, even now, by keeneſt paſſion croſt,
When I in ſtorm of hopeleſs grief am loſt;
Thus, Iſabella, thus eſtrang'd from eaſe,
Is not my ſtricken ſoul with thee at peace?
Then to the wretch, who calls thee, Terrour, come,
And lay me in the quiet of the tomb:
Bear my ſad ſpirit to the peaceful ſhore,
Where virtue reſts; and lovers weep no more. where
Lo! I, and ſorrow part—Ah! Yet ſhall pain
Writhe through theſe limbs, and horrours ſhake again?
Why am I thus? My brain begins to turn;
A thouſand furies in my boſom burn,
And urge me to my fate.—By thee unbleſt,
I break the bonds of life, and ruſh to reſt."——

Part 2d.

Ill-fated paſſion! whoſe awaken'd ray
Dawning gave promiſe of ſo clear a day;
Where blooming fragrance met the raviſh'd ſight,
And purple pleaſure danc'd before thy light;
How, in a moment, chang'd thy face! What cry
Of ſudden tempeſt roll'd along the ſky!

Whence

How, as a vision never to return,
Vaniſh'd the beauties of the lovely morn!

o Whence rising comfort seem'd to shine, what woes
Unnumber'd in thy dark'ning heaven arose!
Wast thou the cause, that wrought this deep distress,
And turn'd to bane the love that came to bless?
Yes, Isabella, hapless wife, from thee
Began, with thee shall end the misery..
O falsest Vanity! as vapour bright,
Which shoots, a seeming star, across the night;
And warm, in youthful bosom, as the beam,
That glittering dances on the silver stream,
In all thy smiling shews, and splendours drest,
Who lur'st the lightness of the female breast,
And bend'st, with sweet delusions, to thy will;
Thou spoiler of our peace, and source of ill,
Behold thy work: behold where weeping lies
Poor Isabella: hear her labouring sighs;
The bursting groans, that her deep sorrow speak;
The words, that from her wounded bosom break.
"And art thou ~~dead?~~ gone! To me do'st thou impart
The latest tender sorrows of thy heart?

Those

o Where cloudless hope ascending shone, what woes
O'er all the ~~pure~~ bright serenity arose!

Thoſe diſmal ~~accents~~ sorrows, that with terrors hung
Forth-ruſhing madden'd on thy dying tongue?
Cut from the world by me, ere yet ~~was flown~~ were fled
~~His prime, for ever is my Edward gone?~~ The bleſſings of his prime, is Edward dead?
O crime deteſted! Now to conſcience cries
Thy teeming guilt; thy black'ning horrours riſe.
O crime ~~'bove all accurs'd!~~ that fiends would curse! which ſtain'd my youth,
Wounded pure peace, and drove me forth from truth,
My fair fame blaſted, made me hate this breath
Of life, and Edward plunge, through ſin, to death.
Yet he would not upbraid my faithleſs vow,
Nor caſt remorſeful darkneſs o'er my brow —
Too generous youth! How ſharper, than the ſword
Thy dropping kindneſs kills in ev'ry word;
While gracious, as benignant ſummer's dew,
Thou bleſſedſt her, thy curſes ſhould purſue!
—Come, Miſery; where eternal tempeſts roll,
Riſe from thy dunneſt hell, and fill my ſoul.
Lo! my bare breaſt: To thee I yield it all:
Here plant thy daggers, here pour out thy gall:

— Come, Misery: from thy dunnest hell, where It roll
Eternal tempests, rise; & fill my soul.
Lo! my bare breast:

It is thy throne: there teach me to apply
My thought, and view thee with unmoving eye;
While fix'd, as rock on the lone mountain's brow,
I ſtand in deep, dark ſullenneſs of wo:
Or if, dread Power, to work ſeverer harm,
Thou break the quiet of that ſlumber'd charm,
Point to the golden bliſs, from which I fell;
Then ſhew my guilt, and open all thy hell.

With thee, my Edward, through each cloudleſs day,
Life, laughing life, had roll'd in joys away;
As in a veſſel ſailing down the tide
Of ſome kind river, whoſe clear waters glide
By flower-enamell'd banks, and meadows green,
We, ſtill enamour'd of the lively ſcene,
Had known each bliſs by moral beauty grac'd,
As down the current of delight we paſs'd.
Then had ~~my rosy~~ the rose of youth each pleaſure ſhed,
Which yet thou ~~call'ſt upon~~ callest on my guilty head;
My riper years had ſeen new comforts riſe,
And ſmiling age had led me to the ſkies.

O ſad reverſe of Iſabella's fate!
O'er whom unbleſs'd the fire-ey'd Furies wait,
In vengeance to deſtroy. Where'er I turn,
Through all the ~~region~~ of my heart, they burn, sorrows
And leagu'd with pale affliction's dark control,
There hold tyrannic empire o'er my ſoul.

When bluſhes yet beſpake my prime of love,
And in quick pleaſure's round I 'gan to rove;
(A giddy round of unenjoy'd delight)
Love's paler lamp gleam'd with declining light——
A paſſion meaneſt in the train of vice,
Offspring of villainy and avarice,
The gameſter's luſt, to no one good ally'd,
The bane, or ſcorn of virtue's honeſt pride,
Sure ſource of wo, uſurp'd o'er that fond heart,
Where Iſabella reign'd, a ſovereign part.
The ſleepleſs huſband heav'd the frequent ſigh,
And beauty wither'd in his alter'd eye;
All joys began to ſicken on his ſenſe
Benumb'd by liſtleſs, cold indifference:

At

A

0 18

"While blushes yet bespake my prime of love,
And I began in pleasure's round ~~began~~ to rove,
(A giddy round of unenjoy'd delight)
Love's little sun droop'd on my wondering sight.
"Who could believe, ~~But who could think~~, that he, whose early youth,
And cheerful manners seem'd the pledge of truth;
"Who spoke so sweetly & so well, with air
So gracious, & with looks so winning fair,
So soon would slight the charms he most admir'd,
The charms, which, yielded, with new transport fir'd?
Yet mark the tale: and if your eye forbears
To weep my ~~fate~~ sorrows, & when shall flow its tears!
Ere yet my bashful prime of joys was pass'd
Mid ~~the fond~~ gilded scenes by ~~glittering~~ ~~light~~ ~~liquid~~ ~~unto~~ heedless pleasure trac'd,
A passion, meanest in the train of vice, &c

At length, of health, of happineſs bereft,
Of fortune ſpoil'd, without one feeling left,
Which bore the ſtamp of honour, forth he fled
Alone, invoking curſes on his head.
His wife too did he leave?—O Heavens! Yes, here
I live, and weep, where none my ſorrows hear:
Pour to the paſſing winds each deep-felt groan;
Or, in mute ſorrow, think myſelf to ſtone.
Now fancy ſhews (O then what pain I prove!)
The joys, that wanton'd o'er my bridal love:
Far from my ſtraining ſight Mirth leſs'ning flies;
Wealth drops the high-borne creſt, and glittering dies.
Lo! in their ſtead, with oft reverted eye
Comes dark Regret, who marks the paſſed joy:
See Melancholy's ſable form appear,
Unfriended Poverty, and hopeleſs Care!
Well; be it ſo: And if, Affliction, more
Thou can'ſt, on me thy dregs of malice pour.
Be lonely grief, and penury the lot
Of one forgetting all, of all forgot:

O forth he fled,
And call'd each curse, that linger'd, on his head.
His wife the husband left — yes here to grieve
I, an abandon'd, scorn'd, weak woman live:
Pour to the passing winds &c.

Day, bring not joy; and, Night, when on this ball
Of weary earth thy ſilent ſhadows fall;
Let air-drawn viſions fright kind Nature's ſleep,
And wailing Conſcience ſtill his vigils keep!
—Was I not falſe to Edward? When his eye
The heart-wept ſorrow dropp'd, was it not I,
Who ~~op'd the tender-flowing fluice within?~~ drew the bitter tears, that rose within?
Did I not perjur'd plunge his ſoul ~~to~~ in ſin?
~~To~~ In horrours plunge it, in the ~~night~~ hour of death?
—O why yet beats my heart, why draw I breath?
Yes; I will live: And, ~~flow~~ thou, consuming grief,
~~Shall waſte~~ Prey on my body; nor ~~ſhall~~ let ſweet relief
Viſit the fainting ſenſe, till long decay
Shall feed on ling'ring life, and cloſe my day.
Then may ſome pitying friend ('tis all I crave)
Lay my cold relicts near kind Edward's grave;
And, where yon cypreſs caſts its awful gloom, yew-tree
Inſcribe this moral leſſon on my tomb!"

THE

THE EPITAPH.

BEneath this turf, this ſolemn ſhade,
What once was Iſabella, lies:
To death, through long affliction led,
She ſleeps where human ſorrow dies.

Search not, O thou, who paſſeſt by,
The ſtory of her mortal wo:
She claims no tribute of a ſigh,
Nor aſks a ſtranger's tear to flow.

But if, by wealth's gay phantoms caught,
A Maid, who reads theſe artleſs lines,
Slighting her promis'd faith, in thought
From lowly, loving Worth declines;

O may ſhe ever keep that vow,
In truth, in ſimple honour wiſe;
And learn, that here o'ercome by wo
The faithleſs Iſabella lies.

Beneath this shade, in earthy bed

and learn, in simple honour wise,
That here, o'ercome by guilt & wo,

E L E G Y

ON THE

DEATH OF A CHILD,

WHO DIED, AT THE AGE OF NINE YEARS,
OF A CONSUMPTIVE SICKNESS.

When the Archangel's trump ſhall blow,
How many, at the call divine,
Shall wiſh, ſweet child, that here below
Their lives had been as ſhort as thine!

ANON.

E L E G Y

ON THE

DEATH OF A CHILD.

FAIR is the face of earth, when cheerful Spring
Awakes the infants of the rising year;
When to the gale freſh flowers their odours fling,
And herb and plant their livelieſt colours wear:

Such was the morn of Henry's days; whom death
Long-ling'ring hath inclos'd in early tomb:
Such was the fragrance of his balmy breath,
And ſuch the beauties of his op'ning bloom.

E'en when the canker prey'd upon his bud,
And marr'd the graces of his flow'ring age,
The ſweeter promiſe of his mind withſtood
The ſtroke of ſickneſs, and defy'd it's rage.

While ſlow conſumption wore his prime away,
And clad in paleneſs his nigh-waſted frame;
How did I grieve to ſee, through that decay,
The laſt, ſweet glimmerings of his dying flame!

To ſee the melting languors of his ſmile,
Wont from the heart on Mirth's light wings to fly,
Scarce riſing faintly thence to gleam awhile,
In farewel ſweetneſs from the faded eye.

Ah! what avail thoſe looks of tendereſt love,
Good-nature ſeated on that modeſt brow,
Endearments, that the tears of joy could move?
Theſe, and each grace, each quick'ning virtue's glow,

Are gone—Weep ye, who gave his beauties birth,
And bending o'er him waſh his grave with tears!
Henry is dead: He's dead, and turns to earth;
He, who had been your joy, through all your years,

The light of virtue, that began to glow? Had
~~The tender dawn of kindling virtue's glow~~?

All, all are gone — O ye, who gave him birth,
Hang o'er his grave, & wash it with your tears.
For he, who lies beneath, & turns to earth,
He would have been the ~~glory~~ comfort of your years;

Had Heaven, who gave the blossom to your sight,
Its growth protected. Nor to you alone,
If aught the weeping verse divine aright, † boding
Shall the departed child, for whom ye moan,

Be cause of loss. The Widow's heart shall weep,
Who, had *he* liv'd, had ne'er known life's annoy:
The poor man shall his bread in sorrow steep,
Whom Henry's bounty would have giv'n to joy.

Slow-wasting Misery, now he is gone,
In her neglected vale, shall want a friend;
Δ She, from whom grief, were Henry there, had flown,
Shall call on death for hopeless sorrow's end.

But why these sudden drops of gushing wo,
Which dew the verse? Δ Our little Henry 's well.
Secure he sleeps in death; nor e'er shall know
Those ills, in others he would love to heal.

Safe

\+ Shall he be cause of loss, whom now ye moan.
The ~~[illegible]~~ grief worn widow's lonely ~~widow's~~ heart shall weep,
Whom Henry's care had soothed in life's annoy: &c

Δ Shall yield unpitied the heart-rending groan;
And call on death for hopeless sorrow's end.

Δ ——————— The child, our grief, is well.

Safe from the ſtroke of malice low he lies,
From gall of envy ſafe, and villain's ſmile:
He ne'er ſhall heave lamenting ſorrow's ſighs
Nor pine perplexed in the ſnares of guile.

Not a King's wrath, nor ſtern oppreſſor's rod,
The flame of war, or hand of felon pow'r,
Can vex the quiet of his deep abode,
Where the bleſt ſpirit waits the final hour.

Dry then the tears, for loſs of infant breath
Which vainly flow: Let ſorrow's accents ceaſe.
Think, that the pure of heart can ſmile on death,
Who dying ſleep to wake in endleſs peace.

4 Who die to wake in everlasting peace.

F I N I S.